

That day, October 1 became known as Contract Day. After 30 years of existence under this oppressive act, St. Croix was once again ripe for an uprising. On Contract Day 1878, more than 400 workers, reacting to two incidents in Frederiksted town and adopting the cry "Ironsides or outside", began the revolt known as the firebun, which ultimately destroyed close to 70 estates, and in which about four whites and 200 blacks reportedly lost their lives. The labor act was repealed 1 year later.

Mr. Speaker, I cannot close without recounting the critical role of women in the uprising. Mary Thomas, known as "Queen Mary," Axellina Solomon, known as "Queen Agnes," and Mathilda McBean, known as "Bottom Belly," emerged as the leaders of this revolt which would in effect continue for another 38 years until agricultural workers on St. Croix achieved their long-demanded improvements in wages and working conditions under the leadership of Judge D. Hamilton Jackson, whose birthday we will soon celebrate on November 1.

These three courageous women would receive long prison sentences for their role in the firebun, which were commuted after 10 years by the King of Denmark. Many of the men who joined them were executed.

Mr. Speaker, this day, October 1, is another proud day and milestone in the long history of my people in our quest for self-determination and freedom. It is especially so for the women of the Virgin Islands, for it represents the significant role we played in shaping and building a society dedicated to social and economic freedom.

Mr. Speaker, I cannot be at home today to join in the celebrations in person, but I join them in spirit, and I thank you, Mr. Speaker, for granting me the time to make this statement in recognition of this day and the important moment in history which it commemorates.

IN HONOR OF MARK J. RUWET

HON. NANCY L. JOHNSON

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 1, 1997

Mrs. JOHNSON of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pride and appreciation that I rise today to express my congratulations and appreciation to Mark J. Ruwet for his 25 years of dedicated service to the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Farm Service Agency.

Mr. Ruwet has been committed to agriculture throughout his life. For the past 25 years, he has dedicated himself to the farmers of Connecticut, first as a county executive director from Litchfield County and most recently as program specialist. His years of hard work and tireless efforts have brought tremendous benefits to the farmers within the State. Mr. Ruwet's support and commitment to Connecticut's farmers is to be commended.

Mr. Mark Ruwet deserves the many accolades he will receive as he is honored for his accomplishments and dedication. For his tremendous contribution to farmers in Connecticut, I salute and thank him.

CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM

HON. RON KIND

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 1, 1997

Mr. KIND. Mr. Speaker, on Monday of this week, 81 former Members of Congress, led by former Vice President Walter Mondale and former Senator Nancy Kassebaum-Baker, called on this Congress to ban soft money. They join a growing list of well-respected leaders of this Nation who have said that a ban on soft money is good for this country and good for our democratic process. Among the other leaders who have endorsed a ban are former Presidents George Bush, Jimmy Carter and Gerald Ford.

Mr. Speaker, if you have no desire to respect the opinion of the majority of the current Members of Congress, at least listen to these former Members. The former Members who called for the ban receive no political gain from their position. They are a bipartisan group from throughout the Nation. They are the people who understand the issue, know how the process works, and recognize that a ban on soft money makes sense for our country.

Mr. Speaker, the list of those who support a soft money ban is only growing. The House leadership is the only road block to taking action on this crucial issue. It is time to allow a vote on campaign finance reform. I will no longer take "no" for an answer.

REPORT FROM INDIANA—REV.
PAUL KNECHT

HON. DAVID M. MCINTOSH

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 1, 1997

Mr. MCINTOSH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to deliver my Report from Indiana. This week, I would like to share a special story of a dear and wonderful friend—Rev. Paul Knecht of Richmond, Indiana.

Reverend Knecht has recently retired after serving over 31 years as the executive director of Wernle Children's Home in Wayne County. Wernle Home is a dear place for both Ruthie and me. On many occasions we have visited our friends at Wernle. We've forged friendships with both the children and the wonderful people who care for them.

Working with abused and troubled children requires a special person, a special love, a special faith, and a special heart. Reverend Knecht is and was a special man.

Reverend Knecht dedicated his life to helping abused and troubled children all across Indiana. His service to God, his church and the needy children of Wernle Home will leave a loving presence of acceptance and stability in the lives of thousands of children who came to Wernle.

So today, I would like to commend the efforts for Rev. Paul Knecht. As he retires after 31 years of service, he will be missed. His life work has touched so many people, so many people and lives forever.

That Mr. Speaker is my Report from Indiana.

INTRODUCTION OF THE HEALTH CARE FRAUD PROSECUTION ACT

HON. ROSA L. DeLAURO

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 1, 1997

Ms. DeLAURO. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to join with my colleagues, Representatives FROST, MCGOVERN, HINOJOSA, SCHUMER, BALDACCIO, FRANK, THURMAN, MANTON, OLVER, and DELLUMS to introduce the Health Care Fraud Prosecution Act today. This bill addresses one of the most serious problems facing our health care system—health care fraud.

Members on both sides of the aisle have spent a lot of time this year trying to figure out how to stretch our health care dollars to make sure that Americans have access to the health care they need. If we want to succeed in our goal to reduce costs without sacrificing quality or limiting access, we need to set our sights on those who are cheating the system. Health care fraud consumes nearly 10 percent of our health care dollars, \$40 to \$90 billion, every year, stolen from our health care system through fraudulent billing.

Medicare and Medicaid are particularly vulnerable to fraud. In one investigation by the Department of Health and Human Services Office of the Inspector General, 75.5 percent of Medicare claims filed by one hospital were found to be fraudulent—that's \$25.9 million worth of bad claims from just one hospital.

This is simply unacceptable. We cannot afford this drain on the health care system. Every dollar we spend on fraud leaves us one less dollar to care for a child's ear infection before it gets serious or to help provide rehabilitation for a senior with a broken hip so he or she can return home. We can and we must crack down on health care cheats.

The Health Care Fraud Prosecution Act will increase funding or FBI agents, Federal prosecutors, and other criminal investigators to investigate and prosecute health care fraud. It will create stringent penalties for those convicted of robbing our health care system. And it will require those convicted of health care fraud to make restitution payments to patients and Government agencies.

Investing in law enforcement pays off. Right now, the Federal Bureau of Investigation returns \$40 to the U.S. Treasury for every \$1 it is given to investigate health care fraud. That's a return rate we can truly be proud of.

We all know health care costs are too high. As we search for methods to preserve the access of seniors to quality health care, to extend the life of the Medicare trust fund, and to insure the 10 million American children who have no health care coverage, it is more important than ever to crack down on fraud and abuse in the system.

This legislation will do just that. I urge my colleagues to support and pass the Health Care Fraud Prosecution Act.

TRIBUTE TO EDWARD R. OBERG

HON. JAMES P. MCGOVERN

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 1, 1997

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I rise before you today to